

SENATE RESOLUTION 206

By Williams

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Mr. Joseph “Corky” Coker on his exemplary career and meritorious service to his community.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pay special tribute to those sterling individuals who, through their hard work, expertise, and dedication, are a credit to their communities and to the State; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding person is Mr. Joseph “Corky” Coker, who is most assuredly deserving of special recognition; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Coker is the esteemed President of Coker Tire Company in Chattanooga, the world’s largest antique and classic automobile tire distributor, co-owner of the original Honest Charley Speed Shop, and a passionate enthusiast of vintage car restoration; and

WHEREAS, Corky Coker’s zeal for vintage automobiles began in early childhood when his beloved grandfather, “Pop” Coker, taught him how to work on tractors and Model A Fords; and

WHEREAS, the booming Coker Tire Company was started by Corky’s father out of the back of his retail tire dealership; and

WHEREAS, Corky returned from college to devote his time to the antique portion of the business, expanding the antique tire division from a five percent to a 99 percent segment of the business with distribution facilities in California and Chattanooga, distributors in over 30 countries, and almost 1000 sku’s in production; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Coker further expanded his business by starting the first mail-order speed shop in America, Honest Charley Speed Shop, with his partner, Mike Goodman; and

WHEREAS, today, Corky's vintage car collection boasts more than 50, containing a well-rounded assortment of hot rods, vintage sports cars, vintage racing cars, brass cars, Classics, model As, antique trucks, and antique buses, in addition to his enviable collection of antique motorcycles that includes Harleys, Indians, Excelsiors, Thors, Reading Standards, and Hendersons; and

WHEREAS, realizing the need for a cohesive group to discuss issues, concerns, and opportunities in the vintage car industry, Mr. Coker helped found the Automotive Restoration Market Organization (ARMO); and

WHEREAS, Corky Coker has been recognized by his colleagues for his astute leadership abilities, and he has lent his incredible skills as former chairman of the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), a member of the SEMA Board of Directors, and as the first SEMA Chairman of the Board elected from the Restoration and Street Rod aftermarket industry, a great distinction; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Coker has also received numerous awards such as, the 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA), the 2006 National Street Rod Association (NSRA) Achievement Award for his outstanding support of the Street Rod industry, and he was named Person of the Year by ARMO in 2005; and

WHEREAS, despite his busy schedule, Corky still finds time to restore, drive, and enjoy his Classic and vintage cars and motorcycles and remains an active fixture in the hobby he helps drive and shape; and

WHEREAS, Corky Coker has worked tirelessly to spread the belief that antique cars and hot rods should be driven, and together with 10 partners, revitalized The Great Race, a national event where people drive their collector cars across the nation; and

WHEREAS, additionally he started the Golden Tire award, which recognizes the person who best represents the ideal of actually driving personal collector vehicles; and

WHEREAS, Corky Coker exemplifies the spirit and dedication that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, adhering to the statement, "To whom much is given, much is required," the civic-minded Mr. Coker has been instrumental in preserving and restoring historic buildings in his hometown of Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, it is highly appropriate that the members of this General Assembly pause in their deliberations to recognize this excellent Tennessean; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor and salute Mr. Joseph "Corky" Coker upon his celebrated career in antique car restoration and his meritorious service to the Chattanooga community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.